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ABSTRACT

Studies on the need for counseling services were conducted at three separate corporate settings in Malaysia. The three organizations were the National Institute of Public Administration Malaysia; Syarikat Telekom Malaysia Berhad; and the Johor Port Authority. Subjects included 129 supervisory officers and 135 supervisees at the National Institute of Public Administration Malaysia; 288 employees at the Syarikat Telekom Malaysia Berhad; and 288 employees at the Johor Port Authority. Results obtained through frequency analysis revealed that the majority of respondents agreed on the need for introducing a counseling service into the corporations. A comparative analysis between the variables according to gender, employee job status, and work experience was initiated. The results of this analysis indicated the frequency incidence of counseling-related problems in the various corporations. The comparative analysis indicated no significant differences on the various problems between executives and non-executives. Problems related to retirement, finance, and the family were apparent among employees of the corporations. (Author/NB)

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Identifying the need for counseling services in organization and industry in Malaysia

by

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ABSTRACT

Studies on the need for counseling services were conducted at three separate corporate setting. The three organizations were the National Institute of Public Administration Malaysia; Syarikat Telekom Malaysia Berhad, and The Johor Port Authority. Through frequency analysis, the results showed that the majority of respondents agreed on the need for introducing a counseling service in the corporations. Also, a comparative analysis between the variables according to gender, employee job status and work experience was initiated. The results indicated the frequency incidence of counseling related problems in the various corporations. The comparative analysis indicated no significant differences on the various problems between executives with non-executives. However, problems related with retirement, finance and the family were apparent among employees of the corporations.

Introduction

The advent of counseling services in Malaysia was viewed from the historical and social perspective. Counseling in Malaysia had its beginnings with the educational services both at the school setting and institutions of higher learning (Lloyd, 1987; Othman Mohamed, 1989). The counseling services in the schools and institutions of higher learning expanded at a rapid rate since the 1970's. During that period, there were no counseling services in the corporate sector in Malaysia. Nevertheless, factors that were closer toward the development of human potential were consistently developed in the corporate sector. In this regard, the corporate sector had understood the concept of human resource development. Subsequently, the management of personnel services in the corporate sector changed its focus and expansion, incorporating the functions of training and the development of human resources in their specific corporation.

Managers in the corporate sector had deeply understood the functions of motivation and aspects pertaining to leadership in the working environment. These awareness was the result of writings and the development of research on contemporary theories of that period. McGregor's (1960), theory X, projected the

assumption by managers that workers despised work, avoid responsibilities, requires supervision in order to achieve the corporate objective. However, in theory Y, McGregor (1960), assumed the opposite; every worker in fact realized their responsibility toward achieving the corporate objective. Every worker is motivated by different needs and values. Herzberg (1975), focused that even though factors such as wages, job stability have relationship with job satisfaction, other factors such as providing employee development and an opportunity to show their potential and skills are also important motivators. Blake and Mouton (1978), believe that managers who were able to cater toward the priorities and objective of their workers would benefit from an increased workers' initiative toward work. At the same time feelings of esprit de corp would developed toward the corporate organization.

Counseling in the corporate environment

Generally, there are two categories of counseling services in the corporate environment. A program that focus on development and career planning involves activities on evaluation, training and planning, and counseling. The objectives of such activities seek to assist employees in making appropriate decision making toward meeting their career development within the

corporation. The second category focus on the physical and mental health dimension. This aspect involves all factors which has an interaction and relationship with the quality of life of an employee in the corporate environment.

In this regard, an interpersonal interaction with an orientation toward individual counseling is appropriate as a method in achieving solutions pertaining to career related issues of the employee. Walz (1982), indicated when supervisors conduct a counseling session with an employee under their supervision, such interaction was more inclined as career coaching. When supervisors conduct an evaluation performance on employees under their supervision and at the same time assist the employees in identifying their career goals, such an interaction was more inclined as career pathing.

The implementation of daily management policies incorporating the contemporary management theories not only increases productivity, it also helps increases wellness of the employees. Among the welfare services which is closest to counseling being implemented in the corporate sector is the Employee Assistance Program. Lewis and Lewis (1986) explained that the fundamental objective in the employee assistance program was catering the needs of employees that require professional helping

service. The conveyance of such help to employees who have personal problems is important. Without such help, the possibility of absenteeism, work related accidents, job dissatisfaction, and conflicts among employees may occur (Lewis & Lewis, 1986). Such programs have not been widely implemented in Malaysia. In the United States of America, the employee assistance program was an extension of the alcohol prevention program among employees involved with alcohol dependency (Lewis & Lewis, 1986).

A survey of the need for counseling services in the corporate sector

There were several early studies on the need for counseling services in the corporate sector in Malaysia. A study conducted by the National Institute of Public Administration Malaysia, examined the training need for designing a course in guidance and counseling (INTAN, 1990) for the institute. Subjects for the study comprised 129 supervisory officers and 135 supervisees. This study was representative and incorporate all divisions of the public sector. However, the study had several limitations because the reliability of the questionnaire instruments administered to the subjects were not reported. Moreover, the sampling criteria were not explicitly reported; thus rendering the questionable validity of the results obtained from the study.

Muhaini Musa (1991) conducted a detailed study on the need of counseling services in a corporate organization in Malaysia. The research study was limited to one corporation that focus on the telecommunication business, the Syarikat Telekom Malaysia Berhad. The sample size determined for the research study n = 288, was based on a power level set at .8 with α = .05, thus reducing type II error. The sample was randomly selected. The subjects were participants of courses being conducted at the Telekom Training Center, Kuala Lumpur. The participants were executives and non-executives within the corporation originating from all parts of Malaysia. As a descriptive survey research, the overall reliability of the questionnaire instruments was high, Chronbach Alpha = .9130.

The basic objective of the study was 1) to identify problems faced by the workers; 2) to observe categories of problems according to age, gender, and job position (Muhaini Musa, 1991). Results of the research study provided an illustration of the counseling needs in a corporation. Table 1 shows the various categories of problems. Problems related with retirement was highest (24.5%); followed with career problems (16.1%); personal problems (13%); family problems (6%); Marital problems (5.4%). Table 2 reflect the frequencies related with

personal problems. Table 3 shows the frequencies related with career problems. Also, this research study was able to make comparisons according to age, gender, and job position regarding personal problems related with career, marriage and family.

Table 1 about here

Table 2 about here

Table 3 about here

The comparisons of workers between the age group more than 35 years with less than 34 years indicated that a significant difference was only found on the retirement problem. The mean for age group more than 34 years old was M = 13.10 and the mean for age group less than 34 was M = 14.06, $t(286) = 2.95$, $p < .05$ (see table 4).

The comparison between gender indicated a significant difference only on personal problems. The mean for the male group was M = 109.56, and the mean for the female group was M = 115.88, $t(286) = 4.65$, $p < .05$ (see table 5). There was no significant difference

on all categories of problems between the executives with the non-executives.

Table 4 about here

Table 5 about here

The comparison on marital status between married and non-married personnel indicated a significant difference on personal and retirement problems. In regard personal problems, the mean on the non-married group was M = 108.87, and the mean on the married group was M = 112.00, $t(286) = 2.53$, $p < .05$. In regard the problems on retirement, the mean on the non-married group was M = 12.97, and the mean on the married group was M = 13.58, $t(286) = 1.98$, $p < .05$ (see Table 6).

Table 6 about here

A total of 82.3% was agreeable that a counseling service be introduced in the Syarikat Telekom Malaysia Berhad. Table 7 indicated the frequencies of preferred categories for refferal assistance amongst employees.

Table 7 about here

Engliman Roslan (1991), had conducted a research study on the need for a counseling service at the Johor Port Authority. Also, this research study had determined the sample size n = 288 with a power level set at .8, with α = .05 thus reducing any type II error. The research instrument was categorize into 3 sections, a) demographic; b) needs and perception on the counseling service; c) employee problems. The questionnaire in regard the needs and perception on employee toward counseling contained 30 items, and the reliability on these items was Chronbach Alpha = .8176. The reliability on the questionnaire regarding the 45 items on the employee problems was Chronbach Alpha = .8351.

The problems identified among the employees at the Johor Port Authority were personnel services (40%); physical problems (30%); finance (23.6%); attitude (22.6%); facilities (20%); relationships (18%); self-concept (13.3%). Also, the results of the research study indicated that 76.8% of the employees was agreeable on the establishment of a counseling service at the Johor Port Authority. The non-executive employees (72.3%)

indicated the need for a counseling service compared with only 27.8% among the executives that need counseling. It was found that more male employees require counseling (69.53%) compared with female employees (30.5%). Also, 67% of employees with less than 10 years work experience requires counseling, compared with only 10% of employees with less than 10 years work experience requiring the counseling service.

Also, this research study conducted a supplementary comparative analysis between the variables according to gender, employees job status, and work experience. The results of the study indicated no significant difference on the various problems between the executives and non-executives. Whereas, there was a significant difference on matters related with finance and relationships between the male and female employees. The mean on financial problems among males was M = 15.41, and the mean for the female employees was M = 13.86, with t(286) 3.26, $p < .05$ (see Table 8).

Table 8 about here

The research study also compared problems encountered between employees with working experience more than 10 years and those employees with less than 10 years working

experience. The results indicated a significant difference on physical problems, problems on the family, attitude, finance, and self concept (see Table 9).

Table 9 about here

The research studies that were conducted indicated that the counseling service was found necessary in the organizations concerned. The results of the research study conducted by INTAN indicated 82.8% of the supervisory staff and 95.4% among the officers being supervised was agreeable on the establishment of a counseling service in the public sector. In the Syarikat Telekom Malaysia, 82.3% was agreeable on the establishment of a counseling service in the corporation. Also, the result of the study indicated that 76.8% among the employees in the Johor Port Authority was agreeable on the establishment of a counseling service in the organization.

Discussion

The studies indicated no significant difference between executives and non-executives in respect of all categories of problems identified. Certainly, the occurrences of problems if any cuts across all employees, indicating the presence of problem similarities irrespective of job status in the corporate sector. Personal problems surfaced as

being significant between gender whereby the mean for the male group was M = 109.56, and the mean for the female group was M = 115.88, with t(286) = 4.65, p < .05. The male sample in the study was 77.1%. The categories of personal problems indicated that cigarette smoking as the most frequent--13.9% among those subjects disclosing personal difficulties, n = 91. Drug abuse and alcohol dependence totals 11% amongst the disclosures, and gambling 4.1%, n =188. In Malaysia, with the current emphasis on drug abuse prevention programs, incidence of dependence calls for concern within the workplace. There is therefor need for a concerted effort toward awareness in drug abuse prevention and counseling related programs.

Also, personal problems was evident between marital groups, the mean on the non-married group was M = 108.87, and the mean on married group was M = 112.0, t(286) = 2.53, p = < .05. The higher incidence of personal problems among the married group is disturbing since the categories of problems disclosed were inclined toward the dependence of drugs, cigarettes and gambling. In the study, 41.0% of the subjects had indicated insufficient remuneration problems. This relatively high incidence of financial insufficiency with the high dependence related problems need to be addressed sensitively.

Problems related with retirement was also addressed,

and showed significant difference amongst the age groups [t(286) = 2.95, p = < .05], and the marital group [t(286) = 1.98, p < .05]. The findings suggested that the married group above the age of 35 years seems more concerned with their expected retirement programs. It is obvious that as employees gradually mature within the corporation, stability at both the workplace and at retirement becomes pertinent issues. Frequencies of career related problems indicated 29.8%, (n=288) of employees felt that management is unconcerned with their affairs. The findings showed that 21.2%, n = 288 of the employees faced difficulties in discussing problems with their supervisors. Although this moderate occurrences is not alarming, there is an implied need for an awareness of an employee counseling consultation in the corporate workplace.

Implication of the research study

In regard the findings of the various studies, the counseling profession must be sensitive toward a comprehensive counselor education program. Also, the counselor education program must focus its attention on counseling courses most suitable with the corporate culture. More courses with an inclination on preventive program on related and alcohol dependence, career development and retirement management need to be constructed toward meeting this need.

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Table 1

Frequencies and percentages of problems

Problem category	n = 288 Percentage	Frequency
Retirement	24.5	70
Career	16.1	46
Personal	13.0	37
Family	6.0	17
Marriage	5.4	15

Source: Muhaini Bte Musa. (1991). Kajian keperluan perkhidmatan kaunseling di Pusat Latihan Telekom, Kuala Lumpur. (Counseling services needs analysis at The Telecom Training Center, Kuala Lumpur). Serdang: Fakulti Pengajian Pendidikan, Universiti Pertanian Malaysia.

Table 2

Percentages and frequencies of personal problems

Problem category	n = 288 Percentage	Frequency
Smoking	13.9	40
Drug abuse	7.6	21
Gambling	4.1	11
Alcohol dependence	3.4	9

Source: Muhaini Bte Musa. (1991). Kajian keperluan perkhidmatan kaunseling di Pusat Latihan Telekom, Kuala Lumpur. (Counseling services needs analysis at The Telecom Training Center, Kuala Lumpur). Serdang: Fakulti Pengajian Pendidikan, Universiti Pertanian Malaysia.

Table 3

Percentages and frequencies of career problems

Problem category	n = 288 Percentage	Frequency
Insufficient remuneration	41.0	118
Management unconcerned on employees affairs	29.8	85
Worksite relocation	25.0	72
Inclination to work with the public sector	23.2	66
Difficulty in discussing problems with supervisors	21.2	61
Restricted office procedure	19.4	55
Non-opportunity of expression	17.0	48
Few promotion opportunities	16.3	46
Non-assertive superior	16.3	46
Insufficient experience in administration	14.2	40
Not liking the work/job	13.2	38
Incumbent position incompatible with interest	10.5	30

Source: Muhaini Bte Musa. (1991). Kajian keperluan perkhidmatan kaunseling di Pusat Latihan Telekom, Kuala Lumpur. (Counseling services needs analysis at The Telecom Training Center, Kuala Lumpur). Serdang: Fakulti Pengajian Pendidikan, Universiti Pertanian Malaysia.

Table 4

T test between age groups on personal, career, family, marriage and retirement problems

	Age = 34 (n = 211)		Age = 35 (n = 77)			
Problems	M	SD	M	SD	t	p
Personal	110.6	10.06	111.14	10.03	0.14	.89
Career	87.80	11.03	90.15	11.76	1.58	.12
Family	80.52	8.63	80.00	8.54	0.45	.65
Marriage	66.96	7.98	66.52	8.11	0.41	.68
Retirement	13.10	2.49	14.06	2.38	2.95	.00

Source: Muhaini Bte Musa. (1991). Kajian keperluan perkhidmatan kaunseling di Pusat Latihan Telekom, Kuala Lumpur. (Counseling services needs analysis at The Telecom Training Center, Kuala Lumpur). Serdang: Fakulti Pengajian Pendidikan, Universiti Pertanian Malaysia.

Table 5

T test between gender on personal, career, family, marriage and retirement problems

	Male (n = 222)		Female (n = 66)			
Problems	M	SD	M	SD	t	p
Personal	109.56	10.09	115.88	8.19	4.65	.000
Career	88.59	11.58	87.88	10.18	0.45	.651
Family	80.17	9.05	81.07	6.81	0.75	.454
Marriage	66.45	8.23	68.14	7.08	1.50	.134
Retirement	13.43	2.43	13.09	2.68	0.99	.232

Source: Muhaini Bte Musa. (1991). Kajian keperluan perkhidmatan kaunseling di Pusat Latihan Telekom, Kuala Lumpur. (Counseling services needs analysis at The Telecom Training Center, Kuala Lumpur). Serdang: Fakulti Pengajian Pendidikan, Universiti Pertanian Malaysia.

Table 6

T test between marital status on personal, career, family, marriage and retirement problems

	Single (n = 97)		Married (n = 189)			
Problems	M	SD	M	SD	t	p
Personal	108.87	8.99	112.00	10.37	2.53	.012
Career	84.35	9.87	84.18	11.57	0.12	.905
Family	80.15	7.96	80.43	8.93	0.26	.795
Marriage	65.97	8.53	67.27	7.74	1.30	.195
Retirement	12.97	2.37	13.58	2.53	1.98	.049

Source: Muhaini Bte Musa. (1991). Kajian keperluan perkhidmatan kaunseling di Pusat Latihan Telekom, Kuala Lumpur. (Counseling services needs analysis at The Telecom Training Center, Kuala Lumpur). Serdang: Fakulti Pengajian Pendidikan, Universiti Pertanian Malaysia.

Table 7

Preffered categories of refferal

Category	n = 288 Percentage	Frequency
Spouse	73.3	211
Family	61.8	177
Male collegues	55.2	158
Female collegues	47.6	137
Relatives	51.8	149
Supervisor	46.6	134

Source: Muhaini Bte Musa. (1991). Kajian keperluan perkhidmatan kaunseling di Pusat Latihan Telekom, Kuala Lumpur. (Counseling services needs analysis at The Telecom Training Center, Kuala Lumpur). Serdang: Fakulti Pengajian Pendidikan, Universiti Pertanian Malaysia.

Table 8

Mean, standard deviation and t value on gender and the need for counseling services and categories of employee problems

	Male (n = 210)		Female (n = 70)			
	M	SD	M	SD	t	p
Counseling Services	106.83	12.26	105.81	11.32	0.61	.541
Physical & Health	11.89	2.99	11.89	2.85	0.01	.994
Family	11.39	3.44	11.10	2.99	0.63	.526
Job Position	14.88	3.77	14.22	3.09	1.31	.190
Relationship	13.57	2.68	12.75	2.23	2.26	.025
Finance	15.41	3.56	13.86	2.99	3.26	.001
Attitude	11.52	2.91	11.23	2.83	0.73	.468
Facilities	11.78	3.13	11.64	2.98	0.33	.738
Self Concept	11.11	3.02	10.77	3.04	0.81	.417
Future	12.86	2.99	12.78	2.61	0.19	.853

Source: Engliman Bin Roslan (1991). Kajian keperluan perkhidmatan kaunseling di Lembaga Pelabuhan Johor, Pasir Gudang, Johor. (Counseling services needs analysis at The Johor Port Authority, Pasir Gudang, Johor). Serdang: Universiti Pertanian Malaysia.

Table 9

Mean, standard deviation and t value on work experience and the need for counseling services and categories of employee problems

	One to ten Years (n = 278)		More than 11 years (n = 2)			
	M	SD	M	SD	t	p
Counseling Services	106.83	12.05	111.50	3.54	0.58	.564
Physical Health	11.93	2.92	7.00	2.82	2.38	.018
Family	11.34	3.33	9.00	2.64	2.24	.016
Job Position	14.72	2.59	12.50	0.71	0.87	.387
Relationship	13.37	2.59	12.00	1.41	0.75	.457
Finance	15.07	3.45	10.00	7.07	2.06	.040
Attitude	11.48	2.87	7.00	2.82	2.20	.029
Facilities	11.77	3.06	7.50	3.53	1.96	.051
Self Concept	11.05	3.01	6.50	2.12	2.13	.034
Future	12.87	2.87	9.50	6.36	1.65	.101

Source: Engliman Bin Roslan (1991). Kajian keperluan perkhidmatan kaunseling di Lembaga Pelabuhan Johor, Pasir Gudang, Johor. (Counseling services needs analysis at The Johor Port Authority, Pasir Gudang, Johor). Serdang: Universiti Pertanian Malaysia.